TRANSCRIPT—STEVE WILSON

Interviewee: Steve Wilson

Interviewer: Ruth Ehrlich and Sandra Jackson

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Sandra Jackson: Now we are.

Ruth Ehrlich: Okay. Today is October the 14th. This is Sandra Jackson and Ruth Ehrlich. We are here today at the home of Steve Wilson to do an interview for the Fairview History Project. So, Steve, we're going to get started by asking you if you would share us your date of birth.

Steve Wilson: It's October the 15th, 1949.

RE: You just told me you're having a birthday tomorrow.

SW: St. Joseph’s Hospital.

RE: So, you were born here?

SW: Yes.

RE: What are your parents' names?

SW: John Wilson Jr. No middle name. That was his name, John Wilson, Jr. So, they called him Junior because he didn't have a middle name.

RE: Okay. Mom?

SW: Mom is Dorotheanna Lebo.

RE: Dorotheanna?

SW: Dorotheanna.

SJ: Spell that.

RE: All one name?

SW: Mm-hmm. D-O-R-O-T-H-E-A-N-N-A. Dorotheanna.

RE: D-O-R-O-T-H-

SW: T-H-E-A-N-N-A. Dorotheanna.

RE: Dorotheanna. What was her last name? I'm sorry.

SW: Wilson. Lebo Wilson.

RE: Lebo.

SW: Mm-hmm. Lebo. Then she was married to a Snyder too, so my stepfather was Snyder.

RE: Which way do you spell that, Snyder?

SW: S-N-Y-D-E-R.

RE: Okay. She was married to Snyder after dad?

SW: Yes.

RE: Okay.

SW: Yeah, my dad died in '61.

RE: Okay.

SW: He had leukemia. 34 years old.

RE: What was Snyder's first name? Your stepdad's first?

SW: William Ray.

RE: William Ray. Okay. Okay. You were married?

SW: Yes.

RE: What was your spouse's name?

SW: Cheryl Dunlap.

RE: C-H-E-R?

SW: C-H-E-R-Y-L.

RE: How long were you and Cheryl married?

SW: 19 years.

RE: Okay.

SW: '69 to '88.

RE: You have children?

SW: Yes. Two.

RE: What are their names, please?

SW: John Stevin II.

SJ: But you spell Steven different on that?

SW: S-T-E-V-E-N, yeah.

RE: Okay.

SW: Well, he spells it S-T-E-V-I-N now. He wants people to call him Stevin, and every time you see Steven, you want to call somebody Steve, so he spelled it S-T-E-V-I-N so people would call him Stevin.

RE: Okay. When was John Stevin born?

SW: He was born here.

RE: When?

SW: Oh, in 1977. August, oh gosh, second.

RE: Second?

SW: 1977.

RE: Okay. How about Zubi?

SW: She was born here in 1981.

RE: What was Zubi's name?

SJ: Rachel Diana.

RE: R-A-C-H-E?

SW: L.

RE: E-L.

SW: D-I-A-N-A.

RE: Zubi. I love that, Zubi. And when was Zubi born? '81. Do you remember month and day.

SJ: He's sitting there making faces.

SW: That's like I say, when I get on the recording, I completely forget.

RE: Okay.

SW: I cannot remember when she was born. Isn't that something?

RE: It'll come back. It's okay, we'll double check that one. What about school? You went to school here in Fairview.

SW: Mm-hmm. Oakley.

RE: You went to Oakley?

SW: Oakley, mm-hmm.

RE: Is that Oakley Elementary?

SW: Yes.

RE: Then where'd you go to high school?

SW: Reynolds.

RE: When did you graduate?

SW: 1967.

RE: Did you go on to college anywhere?

SW: Went to A-B Tech for two years.

RE: What was your major?

SW: Tool and die.

RE: Cool. Did you get a certificate, is that what it was?

SW: No, I got a diploma.

RE: A diploma? Okay.

SW: Machine shop, the first year, and tool and die the second year.

RE: Cool. So, tell us what you did, what kind of work?

SW: Well, before I even finished school, I went into apprenticeship at Square D. They let us work half a day in 1969. I started summer of '69 part-time at Square D.

RE: What apprenticeship were you doing?

SW: Tool and die making apprenticeship.

RE: How about that? So, you really knew you had an interest in that?

SW: Mm-hmm. That's like my grandfather did too. So that's kind of why I got into it.

RE: You did that while you were still in school?

SW: Yeah, they let us work. They'd let us work half a day. After we got out of school, we'd go to work for four hours.

RE: Wow. Okay.

SW: Get us started early on our apprenticeship. That worked out good.

RE: Then from Square D, where'd you go?

SW: It was 38 years at Square D. That was it.

RE: You stayed at Square D?

SW: 38 years.

RE: Wow. How 'bout that?

SW: If they hadn't gone to Mexico, I'd probably been there another five or six years till I retired.

RE: Wow.

SW: But in 2007 they decided to move to Mexico.

RE: When they moved to Mexico, you didn't go to work anyplace else?

SW: No. No. Well, they announced that they were going to Mexico in 2003, I think it was, and it took them until 2007 to get all the stuff transferred. So, I was lucky enough to where they didn't transfer our part until the very last.

RE: That's great.

SW: There was 25 of us left in the plant when I walked out the door in 2007, so that was good.

RE: Where was the plant for Square D?

SW: It's over in Emma where the school... They've got a bunch of different things in that building now. The school system bought the buildings and I'm not sure what's all in there right now. Oh, the Historical Society's there. They're in one part of the plant. So, I've been over there to the Historical Society to donate stuff.

RE: Now tell me a little bit, tool and die making. I think I know what that is, but tell me just a little bit.

SW: It's the parts we made to switches, control switches. We were the commercial control division and the biggest thing we made were if people have well pumps, they probably got a switch that turns that well pump off and on. We made over 40,000 of those a week. So, most people that have a well, they've got a Square D switch on their well. That switch had maybe 30 parts in it and all those parts were made in dies, stamped out of steel and brass. So, we maintained and sharpened and built the dies that stamped

out those little parts. They stamp them and form them and then the women would put them together and they'd turn into a switch.

RE: Did you design any of the dies?

SW: No. No.

RE: Did you have to design any of them? Okay.

SW: No, I just went by blueprints and made them.

RE: Okay.

SW: We had design people that did that.

RE: Curious. That's cool. Yeah, I wasn't so far wrong with my thinking. Tell us a little bit, you were born and raised here, so tell us where were you born? You said St. Joseph's, but where'd your parents live when you were born?

SW: They lived in Oakley.

RE: In Oakley.

SW: Right where mom lives now, yeah.

RE: Okay. So, your mom is still in the home in Oakley. Your mom's 92 living at home alone now. That's amazing.

SW: Yep, she's been pretty healthy.

RE: So, you lived in Oakley. When did you leave Oakley?

SW: In '69 when I got married.

RE: And where did you go?

SW: We moved to Town Mountain Road. Apartment on Town Mountain Road. We only lived there for a year and we found an apartment in Oakley, moved back to Oakley again. The apartment is still there. It's right above where the fire station is.

RE: How about that?

SW: Yeah, the Ledbetters. I knew the Ledbetters, I used to walk by their house every morning to go to school. They had a fish pond and I used to go down to their fish pond and walk right by the apartment that I was going to live in later on. I didn't know it back then.

RE: How about that?

SW: They had a goldfish pond and I always liked to go down and look at the goldfish.

RE: How long did you live in that apartment?

SW: Until '74.

RE: And then where'd you go?

SW: We bought this house, Number 1 Kenilworth Road.

RE: Okay. So, you've been in Kenilworth neck of the woods?

SW: I've been within two miles of home my whole life.

RE: That is amazing.

SW: Except for the year we lived on Town Mountain Road.

RE: So, did you do any time in the military?

SW: No, no, I was deferred the whole time. Tool and die making was a deferment job, so I was deferred the whole time.

RE: Really?

SW: Except for I went off the deferment for about three or four months, but then the war was over.

RE: Okay. You talked about your mom and being born here and we asked about your children. Do you have brothers and sisters?

SW: Mm-hmm. Yeah, I've got a sister, Lynn, who's the same age as Sandra's sister. She graduated with Sandra's sister, Debbie. She lives with her husband out in Arden. I've got a brother who lives in West Asheville with his Russian wife.

SJ: And he was with my other sister.

SW: Yeah. Yeah. He was with her other sisters, yeah.

RE: What's your brother's name?

SW: Brian.

RE: Brian.

SW: He works at a printing company up on the Weaverville Highway out there printing labels for the deodorant I use.

RE: Which child were you? Were you the first?

SW: I was the first.

RE: You were the first.

SW: I was the first, Lynn was the second, and Brian was the third.

RE: Uh-huh. Okay.

SW: The amazing thing is after I got married in '69, mom called me one day and she said, "What would you think about me getting married?" I said, "Well you didn't say anything when I got married, so." She'd known Ray for a long time at church. His wife had passed away and he asked her to marry in '72, I think it was. They got married in '72 and he'd never had any kids. Mom was 48 years old, she got pregnant, and I've got a stepsister.

RE: Oh, my gracious.

SW: So, I've got a young stepsister that was born in '73 or '74, I forget when.

RE: Wow. Wow, surprise, huh?

SW: Annelise, yeah. Annelise Snyder.

RE: Wow.

SW: She lives down toward the coast though. I don't see her too much.

RE: Okay. Okay. Cool.

SW: But that was a surprise. Ray was tickled to death because he'd never had kids and mom was surprised because she's 48, she didn't think she'd ever have anymore.

RE: Yeah, I'm sure that was a big surprise.

SW: That worked out good.

RE: Yeah. Yeah. So, when you were growing up in this neck of the woods, was it pretty built up like it is now?

SW: No.

RE: What was it like? Tell us about what it was like back in those days when you were growing up.

SW: Well, I was just talking to somebody about this the other day. They were asking about grocery stores, Ingles and all this stuff. Oakley had at least four grocery stores that I could walk to. I was telling them there were Sorrells' and there was Huntsingers' and Caubles'. I can't remember the one that was down on... What was the one that was down on the point on Fairview Road where you came out in Charlotte Highway? I can't remember the...

SJ: Oh, Riddles'.

SW: Riddles'. Yeah, Riddles'. So, we had stores all over Oakley that you could walk to and they're all gone now. There's still Oakley Food Center there, but I haven't been in there in years.

RE: Well, did you all have gardening? Did you do any farming?

SW: Oh yeah. Everybody around us farmed. My grandfather farmed, he had a garden. We didn't have one at the house, but our neighbors all did. Neighbors on both sides of us had gardens. One neighbor, David Waldrop's grandfather, had a apple orchard. So, Oakley had a lot of gardens and orchards and things like that and stores and everything back then, but it's all gone now.

RE: But when you had to go to the market to get food and supplies, you walked?

SW: Yeah, usually, or ride my bicycle. I'd go to the store and buy bread and drinks and everything that mom needed right up at Pierces'. Usually Pierces' or Sorrells' store was right at the head of the street and that's where I usually went. Then when I was at my grandparents, I'd go to Huntsingers', which is Oakley Food Center now. So, we didn't drive to the...

I think the only thing granddad ever drove to was he went to the 7 Up plant and bought a case of 7 Up every week because he loved 7 Up. But yeah, the stores were close enough where you could get bread and the essentials. The milkman came, of course, so you didn't need to get milk or eggs or sausage or anything.

RE: Now the milkman brought what?

SW: Milk, eggs, sausage, whatever you wanted. Butter.

RE: Really?

SW: Yeah. Yeah, the milkman brought all that stuff back then. Wasn't just milk, you could get all the breakfast essentials from the milkman back then.

RE: Well, how about that?

SW: They had porch boxes on the porch. If you weren't there, you'd just leave a quarter and he'd put it in porch box and keep it cool. So that's something that's gone now, too, the milkman.

RE: Well, I've not heard of sausage being delivered or anything but milk. I've only known the milkman to deliver milk. I've never known of anybody. How about that? That's interesting.

SW: No, back then, back probably in the thirties and forties and fifties, they had everything. They had eggs and sausage and butter and whatever it was.

RE: Amazing.

SW: Sour cream. Whatever dairy made, they would... Ice cream. It was more than just milk. Yeah.

RE: They came how often? The milk man, did he come every day, every other day?

SW: Every morning. They went through the neighborhood every day.

RE: That's amazing. That's amazing.

SW: Yep. Five days a week the milk truck would come through. If you didn't get him first of the week, you could get him at the end of the week. I remember the little slips,

I've probably got some around here somewhere, where you could leave out there and he'd come and see what you needed.

RE: So, he checked every day to see if he has an order?

SW: Yeah. Well, I guess he could see the porch box and he'd probably see a slip of paper sticking out of it or something.

RE: How about that?

SW: That was cool.

RE: You have a porch box?

SW: Yeah.

RE: I've got one too.

SW: Yeah, I've got the three different sizes. They had little square ones and oblong ones and then bigger ones.

RE: That is so interesting to me. That's so interesting. Now what about your brother and sister? Did y'all play? What did y'all do for entertainment?

SW: Oh yeah. Yeah, we played all the time. Of course there were neighborhood boys I played with usually. Lynn had the neighborhood girls she played with and I had the neighborhood boys. But there was at least four or five guys right close that I could ride bicycles with or go exploring or go down and watch the trains go by.

The railroad tracks were right down below the house so we could hear the trains coming so we'd go down and watch the trains go by. I told somebody the other day we weren't supposed to be doing it, but we would play on the trains when they'd stop. They'd stop in Biltmore to take them apart or to unload or whatever and we'd get on them and play on them. You could hear when they were going to go again because they'd let the brakes off. You'd hear shh and you'd know we'd better get off. So, we played on the trains quite a bit.

RE: Wow.

SW: Right down below the house. I mean as far as from here to down the hill. We did a lot of that kind of stuff. We explored. There was two, David Waldrop and Joe Redman were always around. Joe took me down and showed me Sweeten Creek. We'd go down to Sweeten Creek along Sweeten Creek Road down there and play along the edge of the creek. He showed me places he explored down there. There was a big drainage pipe that you could walk through and it was a long, long way through it too. If you had claustrophobia it would get to you, but it was neat. The water was only about that deep in the bottom so you could walk on the sides of that pipe and go through that pipe under the railroad tracks.

RE: Did you ever make any great discoveries exploring other than that big old pipe?

SW: Well, everybody always talked about Frying Pan Rock on Sweeten Creek down there. There was a rock and it had a dish carved out in it and it had a little slot they said where the grease would run off when they'd cook stuff in it. They had a place underneath it you could build a fire. We always went down to Frying Pan Rock or Pot Rock, some

people call it Pot Rock. But we went down to Frying Pan Rock and played around it and everything. Since then, it's been built up down there and it's gone.

RE: Did you ever try cooking on Frying Pan Rock?

SW: No. No, we never took anything down there to cook or anything. We'd just go down there and usually I'd walk along the railroad tracks and kick the spikes and if the spikes were loose, I'd take them home. I had a big pile of spikes at home and mom made me get rid of them because she's afraid the railroad would come up there and arrest us.

RE: Well, what did you plan to do with those spikes now, Steve?

SW: I don't know, I just thought it was cool.

SJ: He'd still have them if he did.

SW: Yeah, I'd still have them. But I'd just walk along the tracks and as I was walking up through there, I'd kick them, and every once in a while you'd see a loose one and you could just pull it out. So, I'd always take two or three home every time I'd go to the tracks.

RE: You weren't concerned about whether that in affected the integrity of the tracks?

SW: Well, they were loose so they would've had to put a new one in there a little bit longer or something. I'm not sure.

RE: Wow.

SW: But there was two spikes on each side on every cross tie so there would at least be three left. They were all tight, the tight ones. These loose ones, if I could pull them out with my fingers I knew they weren't doing any good as far as the track goes.

RE: That's so funny.

SW: But I had a big pile at the house.

RE: So funny. So funny.

SW: Yeah.

RE: Well, as you were growing up, was there a church? Were you affiliated with a church?

SW: Yeah, Church of God.

RE: Church of God, which is where?

SW: It's right in the curve on Fairview Road. You go up through Fairview Road and it comes to a kind of curve in the road and it's a little church that's still there.

RE: Still there?

SW: Yeah.

RE: Are you still going there?

SW: No, no, we haven't been there. Gosh, we haven't been there since the sixties I guess. The congregation got in a argument and there was two preachers and one preacher went one way. One preacher built The Holiness Temple, which is right on the top of Whitaker

Hill there. McCurry built Holiness Temple and Ray Woodby went to School Road, which is right behind Oakley School, and we had a... I can't remember the name of it now, but it was just a Church of God that we went to on School Road. That's where we went to the one on School Road.

We went to The Holiness Temple down on the hill for a while with my grandparents. I guess my grandparents went there for a while. But there were still people at the Church of God in the Center too. So, there was three different churches we could have gone to. My grandparents stayed at the main church, their church that I've got pictures of them back in the thirties, right in front of that church.

RE: Wow. Were there a lot of activities? Back in that day, were they doing dinner on the ground and that-

SW: Yeah, Homecoming, they called it.

RE: Homecoming?

SW: They'd always called it Homecoming, yeah. I always remember the good green beans that the ladies would cook. Green beans were my favorite back then. But they'd always have fried chicken.

RE: So, they only did dinner on the ground at Homecoming?

SW: Homecoming, yeah, that's what we called it.

RE: You called it Homecoming or dinner on the ground?

SW: Yeah, because a lot of people that weren't at the church, they'd gone somewhere else, they would I guess come back to their home church and that's why they called it Homecoming, I guess. Because a lot of the older people or the kids that have moved on and remarried, we'd all come and gather in the back of the church. I've got 8mm film of one of the Homecomings that it's really cool to watch because I know a lot of the old people that are... Of course, my granddad was making the film, so he wasn't in it, but there was a lot of people I remember from the church.

RE: Wow. Were they literally sitting on the ground or were there tables set up?

SW: Yeah, they'd have tables set up.

RE: They had tables set up?

SW: Or on the backs of cars. It was in the back of the church. I went down there the other day and took some pictures where they used to have those. But it was in the back of that Church of God that's right there in the center of Oakley.

RE: Are they still doing Homecoming there?

SW: Probably, I don't know.

RE: Haven't been to one, huh?

SW: No, I haven't been. When Cheryl and I got married, we sat over at Rec Park one night. I remember sitting over there for it must have been an hour or two deciding which church we were going to go to, whether it was going to be mine or hers. See, she was Episcopal and I was Church of God. So, we fought and fought and argued and argued and

I finally lit into her. I said, "We can go to your church, but we're going to go to the smallest church there is." Because Church of God didn't like a lot of ceremony and all that stuff, like the Catholic churches and Episcopal churches. So, we ended up going to Chunns Cove, that's where we got married. That's the smallest Episcopal church in Asheville, I guess, and that's where we ended up going to church. We stayed there for quite a while.

RE: How was the adjustment to going from the Church of God to the Episcopalian church?

SW: It was really different, that's for sure. Yeah, because there was no ceremony at the Church of God. It was just sing a song and hear a sermon and sing another song and here's some more preaching and then there was some praying.

But yeah, there was a ceremony at the Episcopal church and I had to get used to that. But I liked it. I even went to All Souls for a long time after Cheryl left. I started going down there just because it's close and I thought it was interesting. I liked the music, too, because they always had a nice organist that played these big fancy old... The hymns were old. Some of the hymns went back to the 16-1700s, so I thought that was cool too.

SJ: Now his grandfather was from Fairview and everything and he went there too.

RE: Who was your grandfather, Steve?

SW: Which grandfather?

RE: Who was in Fairview?

SJ: The Fairview one.

RE: The Fairview grandpa.

SW: Oh yeah, Grandpa Pinkney, yeah. They probably went to church out there on your road out there, didn't they? Didn't they go to-

SJ: I don't know.

SW: What was the name of that out there behind Reynolds?

SJ: Oh, behind Reynolds was ( )

SW: It's a lodge hall now or something, isn't it?

SJ: Oh that, that's Reynolds Baptist. It became the Shrine Club and then they bought it and Reynolds-

SW: What was it before it was a Shrine Club though?

SJ: A school when my grandparents were little.

SW: Oh, okay. That's probably the one I got pictures of granddad in the front of the school.

SJ: I want to see it ( )

SW: But I thought there was another church out there that they went to.

RE: Back to this house. You've been here you said since when?

SW: Since '85.

RE: Since '85.

SW: We bought that house in '74, number one, that was our first house. These people, we knew them real well, and they moved to Florida in '84. So, they offered us this house and they offered us a real crooked but special deal that we didn't have to do anything, we just had to move up here and make our payments. So, I made the payments on his loan for years until I could afford to refinance it in my name. Boy, you should have seen the bank when I told him I'd been making payments on this house for years and it belonged the guy in Florida. But that's what he told me, he said-

RE: Yeah, thank God you didn't get screwed over.

SW: Yeah, because I borrowed money on that house to pay him so much down and then I just made his payments on his loan for years until I got around to redoing it. Because I had to send the paperwork to him and he had to send it back. The bank didn't like me doing that, but they didn't know about it.

RE: Wow.

SW: So, it worked out good. I knew Bill Potts real well. He was an electrician and he retired and moved to Florida and took his whole family and offered me the house.

RE: Wow.

SW: So that's how we got in this big old house.

RE: That's great. When you moved here, it was you and Cheryl and your two kids?

SW: Mm-hmm, yeah.

RE: Yeah?

SW: Yeah.

RE: Okay.

SW: Yeah, we moved up here in '84 or '85, and she stayed until '88. She got to painting and wallpapering with this wild girl that her husband got killed in a wreck going to Chicago or something. She was papering and painting with this Mary Brady and I think Mary convinced her to be on her own or something. I'm not sure what happened. I've got no idea what happened. But it was just a shock to come down the stairs one morning and she said, "I don't want to be married anymore." So, in '88, that's what happened. She said she was going to leave. I talked her into staying until she found a place. I said, "I'll live downstairs. You live upstairs until you find a place to move to."

RE: You were kind.

SW: So, it worked out pretty good, I guess, if she had to go. I was hoping she'd change her mind before she left.

RE: Well, you've stayed in this neck of the woods your whole life.

SW: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

RE: What's been the draw? What kept you here?

SW: Well, because I've been here all my life. My family's been here all our life. That's why I say I have to split my... After dad died in '61, Mom started going back to Pennsylvania every summer. When we'd get out of school, we'd go up there and stay two

or three weeks. So, I lived in Pennsylvania in my summers and I got to where I liked it up there too. Not enough to move up there but I liked the family history. My grandfather came from Germany in 1895, I think it was, and started a brewery up there and he brewed beer until prohibition.

RE: This was your-

SW: My mom's grandfather.

RE: Your mom's? Your mom's?

SW: Yeah. My mom was born and raised in the same house with her grandparents. They lived upstairs and the grandparents lived downstairs and that's the way it was until my grandfather up there died in 1940. When he died, my grandfather took over the business and just made soft drinks and sold beer. He didn't make any more beer, but the brewery is still there. So, I got to go through the brewery before they tore it down and it was interesting.

Like I say, it's just family history. That's what I like around here. I've got lots of family history and I knew a lot of my grandparents'... I mean, granddad had 13 brothers and sisters, so I knew at least five or six of them.

SJ: They all lived in Fairview.

SW: Yeah. Well, his brother Will lived in Hendersonville and he had bees too. We'd go out there and get honey, too, from Will. That was interesting. I don't remember your dad robbing the hives, but we'd go out there to get honey from Will in Hendersonville and he'd just tell us to stand back and he wouldn't wear anything.

SJ: Granddaddy could do that.

SW: He'd take a smoker, he'd smoke them a little bit, and he'd rob the hives and they wouldn't sting. I don't guess they stung him. The bees knew him, I guess. I don't know.

SJ: Daddy and Granddaddy could do that.

SW: Yeah. I always thought that was cool.

RE: Did you ever do any of the robbing of the bees?

SW: No. No. I was only about 10 or 12, I guess, or maybe younger when we used to go out there. So probably, I don't know, I think he might have stopped having a honey. That's why we started going to your dad.

RE: Did you say that your grandfather had 13 siblings?

SW: Mm-hmm. Yeah, this is him.

RE: And they lived in Fairview except for the one that lived in Hendersonville?

SW: As far as all the ones I knew lived in Fairview.

RE: Wow.

SW: I know Charlie and Mary and Lawrence. He's the last one that died, Lawrence was. I knew quite a few of them. Grady, I'm not sure where Grady lived, but he worked at the West Asheville Fire Department. But yeah, most of them I knew. I mean, I visited Mary quite a bit because she was right close to the land up there that granddad owned.

SJ: So, Pinkney was your grandfather?

SW: Pinkney, yeah, was my great-grandfather. Yeah.

SJ: Great-grandfather. He lived in Fairview. So how did he and my great-grandfather know each other?

SW: They lived down there right below-

SJ: Oh, you're talking about the foot of the mountain being Fairview then.

SW: Yeah, Lover's Loop, that loop around there where there's 14 acres right there that granddad had. He inherited it from Pinkney and that's where Pinkney lived. I went through the house before they tore it down. That was the only house I'd ever been in that it had a fireplace that went all the way through. If you build a fire in it, you get warmth from the bedroom and in the living room. That was a cool fireplace. Granddad took me through there quite a bit.

SJ: So, in other words, he's more like my family where foot of the mountain instead of being... officially Fairview is there at the top of the mountain.

SW: Yeah, you go past your house and go over the hill and go down in that big loop right at the end, that's where they lived there.

SJ: Yeah, I remember that.

SW: And then Mary and Tom lived right down below it. Mary and Tom Burnett. Mary was his sister.

SJ: Oh, I know the Burnetts now are kin to me somehow.

SW: They had quite a few kids too, I think. Yeah.

SJ: Now see we got maybe cousins.

SW: But Charlie and Myrtle Wilson lived on out in Fairview out there somewhere. I'm not sure exactly. I visited them a few times. But Charlie was a mason. He built a lot of block walls and chimneys and stuff like that. But yeah, I knew quite a few of his brothers and sisters.

RE: It's just amazing.

SW: Just when I was little.

RE: You never had any desire to move away?

SW: No. Uh-uh.

RE: Never tried it?

SW: No. I wouldn't want to. I mean, I wanted to stay right where I knew everything. Where I knew the people and the places and all that. I was pretty well satisfied with this place.

RE: Well, what kind of hobbies have you had? You talked about you worked at Square D for 38 years, when you weren't working at Square D, what kind of hobbies kept you busy?

SW: I made picture frames for years. I've made thousands of picture frames. I mean, most of the pictures you see hanging around here probably if they're newer frames I've

probably made the frames for them. I framed stuff for people at Square D too. They'd bring me pictures all the time.

SJ: And me. You framed for me.

SW: Yeah. I used to make picture frames all the time, but my source of wood went out of business. They built that big apartment building down there in Biltmore where Educational Lumber used to be. So that's where I got all my wood for frames.

I've done a lot of woodwork and I've built cabinets. I built a whole set of cabinets for the other house down there. I built one in here and then Cheryl left so I just kind of quit. I've got one cabinet in there built. I didn't want to build any more cabinets after she left because I was doing them for her, I guess.

But I did woodworking. I liked working with machineries and I couldn't afford metalworking machinery here. It's too big and heavy and I had plenty of it at work. I could do all my metalworking at work. So, I just liked working with machinery so that's mostly what I did, other than collecting things.

SJ: That's what I--

RE: I was going to say, you retired from Square D and did you start collecting things then or you've been always a collector?

SW: No, I've been collecting since 1968.

RE: Have you really?

SJ: He has stuff from Fairview that he had when he was six that he's kept.

SW: I just got a pair of shoes redone at a little shoemaker over in River Ridge. You've been to him? My old shoes that I wore to high school had split up the back. I mean I'd wore them so long that they split.

SJ: I'm telling you.

SW: I went over and asked the guy if he could fix them. Boy, he fixed them good. I've been wearing them lately.

RE: Now, wait a minute. You graduated high school when?

SW: In '67.

RE: And this is 2019 and you had a pair of shoes repaired that you were wearing from high school?

SW: I'm wearing them again, yeah.

RE: And you're wearing them again?

SJ: I told you he keeps everything.

SW: I have to keep a picture on my cell phone of me in those shoes on our senior trip. We went on a senior trip to Rockmont and I was wearing those shoes at Rockmont.

SJ: Well, I've got a picture of them then at home.

SW: Yeah.

RE: What's so special about those shoes that you felt that you need to have them repaired?

SW: They're just saddle shoes. People wore saddle shoes in the twenties and thirties and I started wearing them in high school and people made fun of me and everything because I was wearing these old black and white rah-rahs. They called them rah-rahs because cheerleaders wore them mostly. But I liked them, so I wore them.

SJ: He was the one that got in trouble at school for the Beatles came and guess what?

SW: Oh yeah.

RE: Tell us about getting in trouble at school when the Beatles came. What happened?

SW: Well, I've got picture myself in ninth grade. I slicked my hair back with Brylcreem like everybody did. In '64, the Beatles came out and I started washing my hair and just letting it and I cut myself bangs and everything. The assistant principal would take me in the office and make me comb my hair. He took me in the office two times and made me comb my hair back. He'd say, "Wilson, come here," and I'd have to go in there. Mr. Wright, he was hateful anyway. I'd have to comb my hair back. But as soon as I got out of there, well, I'd shake it back down.

RE: I started say, did he supply you a little Brylcreem?

SW: Do what?

RE: Did he supply you a little Brylcreem?

SW: No, no, I used--

RE: A little dab'll do you.

SW: No, he just wanted me to comb it back, that's all.

RE: That is funny.

SW: But he did that twice and he finally gave up on me because Rick Sharp was another guy, he was a grade or two behind us I think, and he did the same thing. He cut his in bangs.

SJ: Everybody started doing it, but Steve was the first.

SW: Yeah. S,o everybody started doing it. Right. Me and Rick Sharp were the only two I think right then, because I think Rick might have got called in the office a few times, too.

SJ: And there was some girls that liked him because he did the Beatles thing. You know how we all liked Beatles then?

RE: Right.

SW: Oh yeah.

SJ: And so, he had several girls liking him.

SW: Yeah. But I've got a picture of me in the 9th grade and then the 10th grade and it looks exactly like the same picture except my hair's down in the 10th grade.

RE: That is funny. And your saddle shoes.

SW: The saddle shoes, yeah.

RE: That is so funny.

SW: Yep.

RE: That is great. That's great. Did you go into Asheville very much?

SW: Oh yeah. Yeah, every Saturday granddad would take my grandmother to the manor over on Charlotte Street to get her hair done. The gate house had a hair salon. It might still have a hair salon, I don't know. But he'd take her over there to drop her off to get her hair done and we'd go to town and walk around town. We walked around town. I mean, I learned about town walking around with granddad. [Interruption.] I'm sorry.

He would tell me all about the history and the buildings and everything. It was funny, we'd go to the Flat Iron Building to get a Coke and it was a nickel machine but you had to drink it there. You had to pay two cents deposit. So, we'd have to stand in that little shop in the Flatiron Building and drink the Coke and put the empty back in the rack area. But he said, "Let's go get us a Coke," so I knew good and well we'd have to stand there and drink a Coke before we could go anywhere else.

SJ: Did you ever go to the Woolworths counter and all that?

SW: The only reason we went in Woolworths, there was a lady that I noticed she just passed away here last year, she ran the makeup counter right there in front when you went in the door, and when we went in the door, she'd always grin a big grin at Granddad. So, we went in Woolworths just to see her, just for her to grin at Granddad.

SJ: Is that the woman that went to Belk’s after Woolworths closed?

SW: Yeah. Yeah, I think so.

SJ: Okay, I know who you're talking... I don't remember her name.

SW: They had an article in the paper on her. I can't remember what her name was.

SJ: She was the sweetest thing.

SW: But she grinned at everybody, but granddad just loved to go in there and get her to grin at him. So, we'd go in there and look around a little bit just for that, I think. We never ate in there. We'd go to Louie's and get a hot dog, which Louie's had a street car for a while down behind the... Was it John Carroll? What was the woman's store, Lerner? I can't remember. There was a woman's store right there on the corner.

SJ: John Carroll was up on the corner by it, yeah.

SW: Pritchard Park. Well, across from Pritchard Park on the corner there was a ladies' store and right down behind it was Louie's and that's where we'd always go to get a hot dog.

RE: Well, speaking of food, were there restaurants that you frequented when you were growing up? Were there many restaurants?

SW: Oh, the S&W, yeah.

RE: The S&W?

SW: Now, that was a job that I had before Square D. The first job I had, my aunt, my dad's sister, she had a boyfriend that ran the parking lots uptown. So, he gave me a job collecting at the parking lots. I went up there on Saturdays and when I was out of school I'd go up there on Saturdays and take up money in the parking lot. Cheryl would come up

there and visit me and we'd go to the S&W. I've got a couple of receipts where we ate at the S & W and it cost us a dollar and a half apiece to eat at the S&W.

SJ: They had strawberry shortcake.

SW: Oh yeah. Well, I was always too full to eat any. I ate a piece of apple pie every once in a while. But it was amazing to think that you could eat there for a dollar and a half.

RE: Well, I bet a dollar and a half back in that day was a lot of money though, was it not?

SW: Oh, yeah. I only made two or three dollars when I was working so half of it went to eating at the S&W.

RE: Uh-huh. Good times though, right? Good times?

SW: Yeah. Parking cars right in back of First Union. Yeah, First Union Bank. The parking lot was between Sears and First Union Bank and that's where I had to keep all the Sears people out. It was just parking for First Union Bank.

SJ: Oh, I know where you're talking about then.

SW: Yeah, that little, long parking lot that's in between there. Yeah.

RE: Were there other favorite restaurants other than the S&W?

SW: Well, Tingles'. I ate at Tingles' a few times. That's the plate I found the other day. But no, the S&W was usually where we ate unless we got a hot dog somewhere just to have a hot dog. But yeah, after Westgate opened, we'd eat at Baileys' quite a bit over there. But of course, Tunnel Road, everybody always drove Tunnel Road, but we didn't

really go to eat. I'd eat at Babe Maloy's. I worked at a service station for about a year right after I got out of school and we'd always go to Babe Maloy's and get a hamburger at Babe Maloy's or chipped ham or whatever they had.

SJ: Oh, tell her what Tunnel Road was like.

SW: Oh, Tunnel Road was just a big drag. I mean, there was three drive-ins. There was Buck's and Babe Malloy's and Wink's. You'd go to Buck's and you'd go around the curb and see who was sitting there and wave at them, blow your horns, rev up your engine or something, then we'd go up to Babe Maloy's and make a drag of Babe Maloy's and see who was there. Then we go over to Wink's and Wink's had a tower that you could put a request in a bucket and they'd play that song over the radio for you. So, you could sit there and you could have requests at the music tower at Wink's. But Buck's was the big place to drag. That's all we did, we'd just drive around.

RE: Did you just cruise through one and make the loop and then you go back and do it again?

SW: Right. Just cruising. I ate very little over there. I mean, some guys would sit there and eat and some guys would sit there and drink beer. But all we ever did was go over there to see who was there and say hey to them and sit and talk to them or whatever. Yeah, drag cruising Buck's on Tunnel Road. Buck's and Wink's and Babe Maloy's, that was the place to cruise.

SJ: There was a drive-in theater on that road too.

RE: Was there?

SW: Yeah, there was two, Starlight and the Dreamland. Yeah.

SJ: Yeah.

RE: On Tunnel Road?

SW: Mm-hmm. There was two drive-ins, yeah.

RE: How about that?

SW: Yep. So that was pretty neat. At night you could go to one of the drive-ins. But yeah, that's what this tattoo is here. Everybody always asks me about this tattoo. We went to a drive-in in Hendersonville one time with my best friend, my best friend and Cheryl's best friend. They got married. They're still married. But we went to a drive-in and it started raining and I was afraid if I ran my windshield wipers it would run my battery down. So, Seth Weaver, my best friend, he got my umbrella and held it over the windshield until it quit raining.

SJ: If you knew those four together, yeah.

SW: He sent me a thank you note. He's an artist so he sent me a thank you note with this picture in it. So, I had that picture tattooed on my arm and I put his signature under it, so you'd know it was his.

RE: Oh, that's too cute.

SW: No, I have all this junk in the house and people say, "Well you can't take it with you." I said, "Well, there's stuff I'm going to take with me."

RE: Those tattoos are going with you.

SW: Yeah, there's some stuff I'm going to take with me. They asked me why I got tattoos. I said, "Well I can't take anything else with me, but I'm going to take this with me."

RE: Oh, that's funny. So, you got those memories for sure, right?

SW: Yeah.

RE: That's funny. Do you remember any major catastrophic natural events, earthquakes, floods, that type thing when you were growing up around this neck of the woods?

SW: Well, we've had quite a few floods around here. Yeah. We've had-

RE: Any that impacted you and your family?

SW: No. No. We just couldn't go anywhere much because of the roads were flooded. But no, we were always high. I'm high here and we were high over there in Oakley, so I don't think there was ever any... When the snow was real deep, well I just put chains on. Mom worked at the hospital, she was the head of the newborn nursery at St. Joseph's Hospital, and I'd have to get out before I went to school in the morning and put her chains on so she could get to work. So, the snowstorms are probably about the worst thing. We've had quite a few bad snowstorms. But I always had Volkswagen bugs, so they'd always go in the snow. I never had any trouble. I never had that much trouble in the snow.

SJ: He's got the old car out there.

SW: Yeah, I've still got my first car too.

RE: Do you? What was your first car?

SW: It's a 1939 Plymouth. That's the hood ornament right there.

SJ: That's the one-

SW: Yeah, I've got it. I've got it tattooed on here. Its name is Schultz.

SJ: See, Mama looked out our front window one day and there was Steve driving that car down the road with about 10 of us kids hanging on the running board and my mama screeching and running behind us getting us off.

SW: No, I bought that car in 1966 for $50.

RE: It was a '39 what?

SW: '39 Plymouth?

RE: '39 Plymouth, and you bought it in ‘66?

SW: I bought it in '66, yeah. $50. I drove it all through high school and after I got married I bought a Volkswagen. That's what I went to my honeymoon in. But that Volkswagen was my first car other than the Plymouth. But I've always had the Plymouth.

I found out a couple years ago, I was talking to David Waldrop on Facebook and I was talking to him about the Plymouth. I said, "I can always remember buying that old Plymouth over on Porter Road." He said, "My grandparents lived over on Porter Road." I said, "What was their name?" He said, "Cauble." I said, "That's who I bought it from. I bought it from the Caubles." He said, "Well, that's my grandfather's car." All these years

I've been driving a friend of mine from high school, his grandfather's car and neither one of us really thought about it.

RE: Isn't that interesting?

SW: But he was tickled to death to find out I had his grandfather's car.

RE: Well, does your Plymouth still go on the road?

SW: Yeah. Oh yeah.

RE: Does it really?

SW: I drive it two or three times a year. I don't drive it that much. I'm afraid I'll wreck it or something will happen to it, so I just let it sit out there and keep it clean.

SJ: Do you run it?

SW: Oh yeah.

RE: That is so cool.

SW: Yeah, I just had it completely rewired and had the motor redone.

SJ: He's brought it out to our house.

RE: Is it a straight drive?

SW: Yeah. Oh yeah. That's all I have. I've only ever had one. I've only ever had one automatic. That blue Jeep out there that I've got is Cheryl's fault. I had a real nice CJ Jeep and it was a four speed, but she had carpal tunnel and she couldn't drive... I mean, it hurt

her arms to shift gears. So, we went and traded my nice Jeep in on this Wagoneer I've got out here now because it's automatic. She drove that to do her wallpapering and all that stuff for a while.

But see, I had to teach her how to drive. She didn't have her license when we got married.

RE: Wow.

SW: We were married for two years, I guess, before she got her license. So, I had to take her out on Old Fort Road and she drove the Plymouth. That was the first time she'd driven was she drove that Plymouth on Old Fort Road. It had a column shift. It didn't have a floor shift, it had a column shift, but it was easy to drive. I taught her for a while as much as I could and then her brother took her out and finally taught her where she could get her license. But yeah, she started learning to drive on that old Plymouth too.

RE: That's amazing. That's amazing. Were there community gatherings when you were growing up? Any kind of community gatherings?

SW: No, other than the reunions, the homecomings. That was about the only thing I can remember. We never had any family. I mean, we'd go to Cherokee and have picnics, but that was just the grandparents and my parents. But we never had any reunions, not that I can remember. That's what this was, this was a big family reunion where all the brothers and sisters got together.

RE: The Pinkney-Wilson family?

SW: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

RE: Where did they get together? They get together in Fairview or where were they?

SW: That's out there at the old home place, yeah.

SJ: It's really around Avondale and Bee Ridge Road and into Rose Hill. When you circle around to them there's a big ( ).

SW: Makes a loop on Bee Ridge, yeah.

SJ: That's where it was.

SW: That's where the Wilson House was, yeah.

RE: That used to be a part of Fairview. I mean, wasn't it back in the day you say it was?

SJ: Nowadays we'll fight you and say it's not Fairview.

RE: Right.

SJ: (Oh crap.)

But back my daddy's birth certificate says Fairview.

RE: Yeah.

SJ: My birth certificate says Skyland.

SW: Skyland?

SJ: Yeah, Skyland

SW: Where you are, where that is now, is Skyland?

SJ: Well, it was Skyland on my birth certificate.

SW: It's over the hill from Skyland, I guess.

SJ: Yeah. Now it's Asheville and people are trying to call it Fairview again.

SW: As soon as you get out of Oakley, I figure you're in Fairview if you're going toward Reynolds High School.

RE: Sandra keeps reminding me I live across from Reynolds High School.

SJ: Yeah, in the Reynolds district in the old Gashes Creek.

RE: She tells me I'm in Reynolds District, that I do not live in Fairview. She's reminded me of that repeatedly.

SW: Yeah.

RE: Yeah. Is there anything that's outstanding thinking about your memory that if you just had to tell us one story about growing up and what your fondest memory might be, what would that be?

SW: Oh gosh. Yeah. There's so many things that happened through the years, but no, I can't... Right off the top of my head right now, I can't think about it. I'd have to write it down later or something.

No, I just had a good time growing up in Oakley. I mean, Oakley was a nice little community. Oakley reminded me of my mom's hometown. Mom's hometown was only about a mile square.

RE: Really?

SW: I was talking about the milk trucks here, they had every truck up there. You didn't have to go to the store.

RE: Wow.

SW: They had butcher. They had baker. They had fruit and vegetable man. They had milk truck. They had pretzel and chip man. These guys would just come out in front of your house and blow the horn and you'd go out. I was telling somebody the other day, the fruit and vegetable guy drove a hearse. He'd open the back door on that hearse and hang his scale on it and sell you your fruits and vegetables.

But yeah, I've got as many stories about the Lykens as I do about Asheville, but yeah.

RE: Well, you talked about Oakley used to remind you of your mama's little, small hometown. What's been the biggest changes you've seen about this area?

SW: Probably the big stores, just like everybody says. I mean when they built Westgate over there across the river, that was a big change right there because that-

RE: Now what was Westgate? Was Westgate a mall?

SW: Westgate was the first mall in Asheville, yeah.

RE: Was the first mall, okay.

SJ: It's still there.

SW: Yeah, it's still there. You can't hardly see it. When you drive by it you can't see it because they built that big hotel there. But yeah, Westgate was the first mall in Asheville and that took a lot of business away from downtown.

But yeah, downtown used to be the place to go. I mean, anybody from Fairview would go into town, they'd go to town, Asheville would be like going to New York, I guess, because Asheville was really something downtown. It was an interesting place.

But granddad loved it, too, because we'd walk through there and he'd tell me stories. I've ridden Harleys for a long time and something I got from him that I used to lock my Harley up with was a cable. It was a long cable with two loops on the end and an old padlock. What he used to do, he'd go uptown, he'd park on Church Street and he would put that cable through his wheel and around the spring, so nobody could steal his car. He said he came back to his car one day and the car wasn't there and it was down the street. He saw it was down the street there.

RE: His car or his motorcycle?

SW: His car. His car.

RE: His car, okay.

SW: Yeah.

RE: Okay.

SW: With that cable on it. He went down to see what happened and somebody had tried to break that cable by pushing the car. They pushed it and pushed it and they kept

pushing it and they never could break the cable, so they just left it where it was. That cable had a place in the leather, the cable was wrapped with leather, that was worn out from them. It almost ate through one of the wooden spokes on the wheel on his Model T, too. It was a Model T Ford. He said they pushed that thing trying to break that cable and they never could break it, so they just left the car.

But I used that cable to lock my Harley for years. I've still got the cable. But that was a pretty cool story that granddad told me about.

RE: Now this is your granddad again. Tell me your granddad's name.

SW: Wilson. John Wilson.

RE: John Wilson. He was obviously very special to you.

SW: Oh yeah. Well, see, my dad died in '61. He was 34 years old, had leukemia, and he died. So, after he died I spent a lot of time with my grandfather because he was like a dad to me. So, like I say, we'd go uptown every Saturday and I'd spend the weekends up there at their house.

RE: Where did Granddad Wilson live again?

SW: He lived right across from Oakley school.

RE: Right across from Oakley school.

SW: Yeah, where my aunt still lives in his house, the house that he built. Yeah, he built the house and like I say, one of his brothers laid the block and I watched him build that

house that my aunt lives in now. So that was pretty cool. But I spent a lot of nights in the old house, too, that they're probably going to tear down here pretty soon.

RE: Had he built the previous house?

SW: No. No. They bought it. It was probably built back in the early twenties. Right after my dad was born, my dad wasn't born in that house, my dad was born in '26, and I think in 1927 or ‘28, they bought that house. I'm not sure, my aunt told me who they bought it from, but I can't remember. But they had a cow and a pig there.

That was something else about Oakley. I mean, people had not only gardens, they had livestock. I've got the cow's bell, we found it the other day. My aunt gave me the cow's bell. So yeah, they had a cow and they had a pig. But she said the last pig that they had in Oakley, it was like a friend to them and granddad had to shoot it and they had to slaughter it. But she said it was the last pig they had because granddad shot it and it didn't kill it and he had to shoot it again. So, she said they never had another pig. Never had another pig. He couldn't stand that having to slaughter the pig.

But anyway, yeah, there's all kind of stories. But yeah, I spent a lot of time with granddad.

RE: Mm-hmm.

SJ: What'd you all do when you'd go uptown on Saturdays though, besides going to get the Cokes?

SW: We just walked. He'd--

RE: Go in and flirt with that lady at Woolworth's.

SJ: Well, that too.

SW: Yeah. Well, yeah, we'd drink the Coke at the Flatiron Building. We would go to Louie's and eat a hotdog. He had a friend that he saw up there all the time and they'd stand and talk for a long time. I don't know the whole story, but I just know Bill Burnett was somebody that granddad had always talked to, about every Saturday, Bill just wandered around uptown like we did, I guess, just seeing who he could find. It was kind of like cruising Buck's back then, I guess.

SJ: I guess.

SW: Let's go up and cruise town and see who he can find to talk to. But I learned a lot about town. Right before they tore down the Langren Hotel, granddad and I walked through it. Completely stripped. I mean, they'd taken all the beds and the woodwork and everything out of the hotel and it was just a concrete structure then. But we walked through it. Went in the lobby and went up the stairs and stood on the porch where Teddy Roosevelt had given a speech. We walked through that hotel and then we stood across the street weeks later and watched them knock it down. Everybody was so sad when they knocked down the Langren Hotel and now they're building another hotel right in that same place.

SJ: I don't even really remember where that was.

SW: Well, it was parking garage for a long time and then they tore the parking garage down. Now they're building a hotel on that corner right there. It's right behind the Akzona building.

SJ: You're talking about walking through it, my grandmother, my little sister talks about nanny taking her where they built the skyscraper, the Northwestern Bank building.

SW: Oh yeah. Yeah.

SJ: Took her up steps in that one. It was still just frames and they were little walking around there.

SW: That's exactly what I did. I walked up those steps before they started the elevators.

SJ: Yeah.

SW: Granddad wanted to go to the top of it, so me and granddad one Saturday walked to the top of the Northwestern Bank.

SJ: Well, Shirley and Nanny did.

SW: Yeah. Yeah, they must have let people in there to do that. We walked all the way up to the 18th floor or whatever it was. But that was cool.

But yeah, I had a lot of fun uptown walking around town and learning about all the different stuff. Going to the bicycle shops and looking at the bicycles. There was a nice little bicycle shop right across from Sears in a basement right in the corner.

SJ: Hearns.

SW: Was it Hearn’s or Merrills? I think it was Merrills.

SJ: Really?

SW: I think Hearn’s was down on Main Street down there. But I think this was Merrills that was right there across from Sears in a corner basement there.

We'd always park on Church Street. I know we’d circled Church Street. That's in back of the Flatiron Building. You'd go down and you'd circle around on Church... Not Church Street, Wall Street. Wall Street was the one that you went around by the Flatiron Building. He would drive around there six, eight, ten times until somebody pulled out of a parking space. Then as we were walking around, you had to watch your time because you had to go back and feed the meters. It was a nickel for an hour. So, in an hour we'd have to go back and feed the meter. So, we'd get back there and feed the meter and then walk around some more until Granny was ready, had her hair done, and we'd go back and pick her back up. But we had at least an hour to walk around uptown or two.

RE: That sounds fun.

SW: Yeah, we did that every Saturday. Every Saturday.

RE: That's great.

SW: Yeah.

RE: You think anything else we need to ask Steve?

SJ: No, we'll probably think of it later.

SW: I know it. Yeah, I'll probably think of a lot of stories later. There was a lot of stuff that happened uptown through the years that I can remember.

SJ: Were you there when the bank burnt?

SW: Yeah. Well, I was in school. I was at A-B Tech when that happened. But we went up there and watched it from down below the bus station. The bus station was over there on Coxe Avenue and that's as far as they let us go, so we went up there and watched the smoke.

But I was trying to think of some more Fairview stuff. There's lots of stuff went on out in Fairview, too, but through the years I've just completely forgotten it. But we had lots of good times at Reynolds High School, that's for sure. It was good to get to know everybody from the Fairview area. A lot of people we knew from Oakley ended up going to Lee Edwards or Asheville High. Linda Keys, you remember she went with us for a year or two and then she transferred to... I think everybody picked on her so much because she was kind of like a hippie like all the rest of us. I think she got tired of getting picked on and moved to Asheville High.

SJ: She liked the Beatles.

SW: Yeah. Yeah.

SJ: I still have her lipstick marks on the signed picture I have.

SW: You know that I just found out a few years ago, too, when I first went to Reynolds and started wearing my hair like that there was girls that would write me notes and put them in my locker.

SJ: I told you.

SW: I had a shoebox full of them. I had a shoebox full of notes. They'd leave me a note every day. I shared a locker with Jim Presnell, and Jim Presnell, I think he got tired of all the decorations and the empty beer cans and stuff they put in my locker, but he'd put up with it. But I just found out in the last few years who that was. It was Alix Popadines. Alix Popadines used to put letters in my... I've got two of them. I finally found two that I hadn't given to my girlfriend at the time. I gave them to her and she burned them all. I had two that she didn't get.

I wish I had all those letters because it was really neat to have that much attention. Every day I'd look forward to coming in and reading the crazy letters that Alix would leave me. I didn't know it was Alix.

RE: Alix was writing these letters pretending to be girls.

SJ: No, Alix--

SW: No. Alix--

SJ: Her name, Alixandra.

RE: Oh, Alix is a girl.

SW: Yeah, Alix Popadines. Yeah. Susan Martin was her friend. I was going back to my locker one day for a book I'd forgotten or something and Susan Martin was standing there looking... What do you call it?

SJ: Guilty?

SW: Guilty. She was standing there looking guilty. So, I had an idea she knew who it was and I finally talked to her on Facebook and she told me, yeah, it was Alix. But I didn't know that for--

SJ: I think I knew it back then.

SW: Oh, did you? Yeah, Susan Martin and Alix Popadines, and I think Linda Keys was probably in on it a little bit too. There's four or five of them that were in on it, but I think Alix was the one that was writing the letters because they were some interesting letters. I think Linda Weaver might have written one or two, too.

But I always wish I hadn't given those things to Carolyn. Carolyn Lamb was my girlfriend when I was at Oakley in eighth grade and ninth grade. I gave them to her and she burned them all. But anyway, it's stuff like that.

RE: Hindsight is 20/20, isn't it?

SW: But it's something to find out something 50 years later that you didn't know. I had an idea, but I never dreamed, and I don't think I've ever talked to Alix. I've talked to Susan, I think, but I've never talked to Alix Popadines. I've seen pictures of her and she was a pretty girl, but she was a year ahead of me, so she was older. She's probably a couple years older than me.

RE: That's great.

SW: I was kind of a nerd anyway. I got picked on a lot (laughs) but I didn't mind it. But yeah, it was fun.

SJ: Yeah, it ought to be fun.

RE: All right. Well, we'll wrap up here if you can't think of anything else. But this has been so much fun. You just know all kinds of stuff. You and Sandy are a case.

SW: Yeah. There's probably all kind of other things that I couldn't think of. I'll be 70 tomorrow and it sure does feel like it, that's for sure. That's for when I start trying to think about things like my daughter's birthday. Why can't I think of my daughter's birthday? Is it February 2nd? I can't remember when my daughter was born. Isn't that ridiculous?

RE: You will after we leave.

SJ: Yeah, you will.

SW: Yeah, I know it. Yeah.

RE: You will.

SW: Yeah. I'm pretty sure that Stevin's was August, but I cannot remember.

RE: We won't tell her. Okay?

SW: Yeah, Zubi. Oh, she had a thing that happened. I mean, she wanted me to give her some money for the... They had some kind of a Halloween thing and I was going to give her some money for the Halloween thing and somebody else covered my granddaughter, I think. But I went ahead and gave her some money the other night when she came over anyway and they went to Fun Depot. They had a thing at Fun Depot and it was going to cost $30, I think.

Oh, it was a haunted house. Went to a haunted house out in Hendersonville or something. But it was $30. It was kind of like a donation. But boy, they said they scared them like crazy. But anyway, I wanted to pay her back. I wanted to pay her for the Halloween thing so I gave her some money and they left.

She called me a little while later, there was a guy here buying records, and she called me a little later. She said, "I've locked my car and I can't get it unlocked. The unlock button won't work." She said, "Have you got a slim jim?" I said, "I don't have a slim jim." I said, "Call the police, they might get in it for you." She called me a lot later and said, "No, the police wouldn't do it." She had to pay a locksmith $50 to unlock her car. I said, "Well, that money didn't last very long." She said, "Yeah, but at least I had it."

SJ: Well, your granddaughter, I saw her one day in the lobby with Cheryl and she was all dressed up like Princess Leia.

SW: Yeah, McKayla, my granddaughter. My daughter lives with her boyfriend over in Montford and my granddaughter is going to Cane Creek. I want her to go to Reynolds.

That's one good thing about Cheryl living out there is she can use her address and she goes there after school so she can go to Cane Creek. As long as she's got Cheryl's address she can go to Reynolds too if she wants to. I can't remember why she didn't go to Fairview. I think she had friends that were in Cane Creek so that's why she ended up at Cane Creek instead of Fairview.

I hope she wants to go to Reynolds. Because that was a big thing I thought when Cheryl left me, if she hadn't left me, the kids would've had to go to Asheville High. It was a good

thing that she moved to Haw Creek because then they got to go to Reynolds. Both my kids graduated from Reynolds, too. So that was a big plus of her leaving because I wouldn't have moved from here just so my kids could go to Reynolds. But she had a house in Haw Creek, so the kids got to go to Reynolds. So that was cool. Both of them graduated from the same high school we did.

RE: That's cool. Yeah. Alrighty. Well, let's turn this thing off. There's a couple things I want to tell you about that are just funny you talked about.

END OF INTERVIEW.